

Good day,

Whether we live, work, commute, recreate, explore in and around the Reserve... these wonderful rustic roads get us places - A little slower sure, with bends here and there, maybe a stream to cross and a stop for the strutting Tom turkey... but what a ride! For our farm businesses that depend on agritourism the rustic roads are a big part of the draw.

MCA is pleased to support the Rustic Roads master plan update submitted to the Council by Planning and the recommendations of the RRAC.

Take a gander...









Martinsburg Road... a politicians road



Large, slow moving equipment with flag truck in lead











Big skies along the way



Gravel can be, as here, well maintained and safely traveled



Ride for the Reserve
FALL FARM BIKE TOUR

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
MONTGOMERY COUNTRYSIDE
ALLIANCE

Cyclists, joggers, hikers...



Escapees



15 years

LEAVE NO FARMER BEHIND

Nurturing diverse next generation farmers in Montgomery County

BY CAROLINE TAYLOR

Let's face it, the vast majority of Americans are consumers. We are not self-sufficient when it comes to filling our fridges and cupboards... not remotely. We depend on an ever-dwindling number of farmers growing on ever decreasing farm acreage. If we are to strengthen this fragile system in the future we must be intentional about cultivating next generation producers. Take a look at some numbers. The average American, according to the US Food and Drug Administration, consumes 1885 pounds of food a year, nearly 1 ton! Add to that the sobering statistic that nationally, and in Maryland, the average age of our farmers is just over 59. The nation lost more than 100,00 farms between 2011 and 2018. And though we are fortunate to have family run farms in Montgomery County that will be passed along to the next generation, these do not number nearly enough to address the growing need for local food production. Moreover, we must provide equitable access to land

and resources for skilled diverse new farm businesses. The Agricultural Reserve, at over 90,000 acres, has plenty of room for more farms, and we will all thrive with greater inclusiveness.

Giving Voice to Challenges

Last June a group of diverse producers, all growing in Montgomery County, met at Dodo Farms in Brookeville with Councilmember Gabe Albornoz to share concerns about the difficulties new farm businesses encounter. Uplifting news of the growing diversity of local producers and products, especially culturally relevant crops, was tempered by the universal frustration about the myriad barriers to getting started. Access to affordable land and resources such as wells, fencing, equipment, affordable close by housing options, equitable access to capital, clearer guidance to navigate various requirements for farm start-ups were cited as needed if we



PHOTO: WJB MIDDLETON

Lastly, please ensure that we include the voices of all our producers in these conversations... on committees. The joyful increase in diversity of those who are growing, and who want to grow here in Montgomery County, should be supported and celebrated.

Warmly,

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“Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and designs, and she has more votes, a larger memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do.” ~Wendell Berry